

NO DEMOCRACY IN DENVER

Cops attack protesters at DNC

Emergency news conference exposes gov't terror

By LeiLani Dowell
Denver

Denver police have used violence and mass arrests in an attempt to silence dissent during the Democratic National Convention. However, organizers and activists have put the city and police on notice that their intimidation tactics will not work.

Several hundred activists were gathered in Civic Center Park on Aug. 25, where the Recreate 68 Alliance (Recreate68.org) has a permit for a week of actions during the DNC. At about 6 p.m., Denver police began massing in groups, encircling the park. Squads then began to march through the park, pushing and kicking people as they passed. One group of heavily-armed police lined up directly across from the Troops Out Now Coalition table.

At about 7:00, a group of mostly young people responded by chanting "No justice, no peace!" The police charged the group, hitting several of them with pepper spray. Attempting

to get away from the club-swinging police, the group moved onto Cleveland Street, joined by many others from the park.

Police then closed off both ends of the block, entrapping the group as well as many bystanders. They began hitting people with their nightsticks and using pepper spray and pepper balls.

One young protester, Martin, told the Denver Post, "We moved to the sidewalk—a few people stayed in the street—because we didn't want a confrontation, but it didn't matter. People started pleading: 'Let me go. I want to go home.' ...

"Some of the police on horses were whacking people with their batons. I was told later that the police were telling us to disperse, but I didn't hear them say that. And where would we go? The police were all around us, not letting us leave."

TONC organizer and Navy veteran Dustin Langley was among those trapped on the street between the police lines. He noted that spirits remained high, saying: "Street medics took care of those who had been pepper sprayed, and we

Continued to page 7

MANDO OBRERO
OTAN-EEUU en Georgia 12

ACTIVISTS IN DENVER
Oppose war, racism 7

STAY OF EXECUTION
Hope for Jeff Wood 3

JUSTICE FOR LUIS RAMÍREZ
Racist killing of immigrant sparks actions 6

FORECLOSURE FIGHTBACK
■ Role of labor
■ Michigan campaign heats up 5

STRATEGIES FOR STRUGGLE
'Low-wage capitalism' Part 2 4

THE OTHER WAR
U.S. atrocities in Afghanistan 11



Front banner at anti-war march in Denver, Aug. 24. Right, Larry Hales from Recreate 68 Alliance and FIST tells off Denver police. To his left is John Parker from Los Angeles Int'l Action Center.



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A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE JACKSON
3

WW IN 1982
D.C. rebellion against KKK 2

Mass protest drives Klan out

Gov't defense of KKK sparks rebellion

By Andy Stapp

Washington, D.C., Nov. 27—An attempt by the Ku Klux Klan to march today in this predominantly Black city was stopped and the Kluxers were run out of town by thousands of angry anti-KKK protesters.

While the Klan was driven off, the coming of these genocidal lynchers to D.C., the protection given them by the government and a police attack on anti-Klan protesters sparked an uprising inside this city.

Unable at Lafayette Park to get at the KKK itself, and outraged that the Reagan administration had given the green light for such notorious killers to enter the heart of the country's capital city behind a protective phalanx of at least 1,000 cops, large numbers of Black youth, and many others as well, jammed all the streets radiating from the White House to McPherson Square where the All-Peoples Congress was holding an anti-KKK rally.

People were furious. Over 60 percent of D.C. Black youth can't find a job; more than 100 families had been evicted from their homes the previous Saturday; and hunger stalked countless homeless on Thanksgiving.

The national government thought it appropriate to, on the one hand, propose a tax on the employed while simultaneously lavishing at least a million dollars providing police bodyguards for sadistic bigots!

The cops as always did the task assigned them by the federal authorities who rule the District: give kid-glove treatment to the racists and come down on the people with an iron fist.

Around 12:30 p.m. the police started to push into the angry crowd on 15th and H Streets with their horses. Jabbing with clubs, the mounted cops cursed and shouted for everyone to "clear the area."

The many who had come to confront the Klan retorted bitterly, "Take off that blue uniform and put on your white sheet!" "Namibia! Namibia!" (in reference to the manner South African police repress the Africans of that nation), and "Death to the Klan!"

Within seconds after those in the front lines had been knocked down by the horses, the air was filled with objects thrown at the police. Soon the exploding sound of tear and pepper gas could be heard, and then the gas itself enveloped several blocks, especially H and I Streets.

That did it. Within one hour almost everyone in sight was engaged in a full-scale running battle with the cops.

Political rebellion

The fight raged intensely at Madison and H during the first hour of what was to become the most militant clash between the police and the population of D.C. in over a decade and the most politically motivated Black rebellion here since the assassination of Martin Luther King. In short, by defending the hated Klan and by attacking those who wanted to attack racism, the cops ignited the uprising.

Throughout the rest of the afternoon, motorcycle cops lobbed scores of tear gas bombs. Foot patrols hurled rocks, grabbed and beat anyone they could catch, arresting 32 men and women.

Uncowed by these assaults, the crowd constantly regrouped and continually charged, fearless and defiant. Along with the Black youth—who constituted the majority of the heroic element which today acted as the vanguard of society against racism—Latin@, white, Native, Asian and other people also joined the

battle. In one stunning episode, they pushed the cops back almost to the White House.

Only an all-out charge by 40 mounted police up Vermont Ave. and adjacent sidewalks succeeded in briefly dispersing the throng. But as many times as the cops tried to drive the people from the area, the anti-racists always regrouped and fought back.

Banks lost their windows, and unmarked patrol cars were overturned within sight of the executive mansion. Even when police dropped their nightsticks and pulled guns, even when they committed near homicidal violence like shoving a man through a plate glass window, the people remained in the streets in magnitude, laughing and jeering and relishing their victory over the KKK and the cops, who seemed overwhelmed.

Carrie Morris, a Black woman who is a leader of the APC in Atlanta, told this reporter at the rally, "The Klan has been murdering people for many years and shouldn't be allowed to demonstrate in Washington. When I was a child 10 years old, I lived in a country town and we couldn't go out at night without hiding in the bushes because of the Klan. I remember them burning crosses right at the polling places and I say we put a stop to it now!"

Today the Klan was stopped, the terrorists were driven out—a humiliating defeat shared by both the KKK and the cops who protected them. It was a defeat too for the Reaganite bigotry which the hooded fascists dreamed would bring back the era when the Klan kept down millions with the lash, rifle and noose. □



Black youth, and others as well, jammed the streets radiating from the White House to McPherson Square where the All-Peoples Congress was holding an anti-KKK rally.



Is the Klan just another right-wing group—or a secret terrorist organization? **The KLAN & the GOVERNMENT** examines the special relationship with the state that has allowed the klan to exist for centuries despite its criminal history of lynchings murders, and intimidation.



Read this book by Sam Marcy online at: tinyurl.com/65fe5y

This week ...



★ In the U.S.

Cops attack protesters at DNC	1
WW 1982: Mass protest drives Klan out	2
Jeff Wood gets stay of execution	3
A tribute to George Jackson.	3
Mumia Abu-Jamal: '68 then and now	3
Low-wage capitalism, part 2	4
Campaign builds for moratorium march	5
Prospects for labor to lead foreclosure fight	5
Public housing workers: 'Stop the firings'	5
Fatal beating of Mexican sparks protests.	6
A journey in support of immigrant rights.	6
Activists in Denver streets against war, racism.	7
Book review: Unearthing a military scandal.	10

★ Around the world

Paraguayan president vows to fight inequality.	8
Lawyers in Colombia seek int'l solidarity	8
Arroyo escalates brutal campaigns of suppression	8
Zimbabwe convenes parliament.	9
Protest against Israel's founding	9
A call for genuine peace in Mindanao	10
U.S. air strikes spark angry Afghan response.	11
Political prisoners in Afghanistan	11

★ Editorials

Iraq: A permanent war crime.	8
--------------------------------------	---

★ Noticias En Español

OTAN-EEUU en Georgia.	12
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A blow to death penalty

Jeff Wood receives stay of execution

By Gloria Rubac

After months of intensive campaigning and then four days of visits telling him goodbye, Jeff Wood's family began screaming and jumping up and down with joy around 1:30 p.m. on Aug. 21 when attorneys for Wood told them the federal court had issued a stay of execution and the state of Texas would not try to appeal the ruling.

Wood's family was in Huntsville preparing to join protesters at the death house when the news came. "We are so happy and so relieved that it is quite a sight here with people laughing and crying at the same time," Wood's spouse, Kristin Wood, said. Kristin was preparing to witness the execution.

In a blistering opinion, Federal District Court Judge Orlando Luis Garcia in San Antonio criticized Texas courts saying, "With all due respect, a system that requires an insane person to first make 'a substantial showing' of his own lack of mental capacity without the assistance of counsel or a mental health expert, in order to obtain such assistance is, by definition, an insane system."

Judge Garcia halted the execution of Wood to allow mental health experts to determine whether Wood, who has a history of emotional illnesses, is sane enough to be put to death. He expects to hold a hearing by March of 2009. He also appointed attorneys Scott Sullivan of San Antonio and Jared Tyler of Houston to represent Wood and a psychiatrist to work with them.

Activists from around Texas had worked with the Wood family for months trying to stop the execution. Wood was convicted under Texas' law of parties but he killed no one and was not inside the store when a robbery and murder took place.

Wood spent his Aug. 19 birthday visiting family. The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, which has the power to recommend clemency to the governor, denied Wood's clemency petition on this day.

Fortunately, attorneys Sullivan and Tyler had filed petitions in the courts and because of good lawyers and a public political movement in the streets Wood is alive today. Support for Wood had come from all over the U.S. and from Europe and Australia.

"Right now, first and foremost we want



WWW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Hip Hop artist Capital X and Kids Against the Death Penalty.

to thank everyone who got involved and we just hope and pray people won't forget about Jeff because the fight is not over. We got a break and we thank god for that but it's still not over. Even though the stay was issued on issues of Jeff's mental health, I still think it is important we focus on the rest of the issues in his case and the law of parties," said a grateful Kristin Wood.

Youth organize protests against death penalty

Wood's daughter, nieces, nephews and young friends formed their own group, Kids Against the Death Penalty. They meet regularly and have elected officers. They issued their own fliers for Wood, have a My Space page and spoke at San Antonio press conferences. They have helped to gather over 5,000 signatures on petitions and had prominent individuals send letters to the governor and Board of Pardons asking for clemency.

The KADP also led a march in Austin for Wood.

On May 24, Wood's family, the KADP and supporters joined with Puerto Rican Hip-Hop artist Capital X, who was nearing the end of his 1,700-mile walk from Trenton, N.J., to Austin, Texas, in protest of the death penalty.

On May 25 they demonstrated at the governor's mansion. Since it was being remodeled, they then went to his temporary home, following another car into the gated community. Gov. Rick Perry did not answer his bell or the intercom, so the family and activists held up the signs to

the security camera for the governor to see.

Since Wood attended school in San Antonio, activists and family gathered there in front of the Alamo to hold a press conference and a rally on August 2. Speakers included Wood's father, Danny Wood; Capital X; Scott Cobb with the Texas Moratorium Network; and the KADP.

Sherri Clausell of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement read a statement from Lawrence Foster, the grandfather of Kenneth Foster. Last summer, Kenneth Foster was facing execution under similar circumstances. Foster was also convicted under the law of parties, but just hours before his execution he was granted clemency.

Foster's statement said: "I hope no other family would have to endure what the Foster and Wood families have gone through. Jeff's case is so much like Kenneth's case that it is like a mirror image. I remember thinking last summer that Texas had already executed the killer and yet they wanted Kenneth. It is the same for Jeff. The killer has been executed. What more does Texas want? Jeff is not guilty of anything and wasn't even in the store. Where is justice in Texas today? It is sure not in killing Jeff Wood. His execution should be stopped today."

Then the KADP led an impromptu march around the Alamo. Many signatures were gathered from tourists at the Alamo, some from as far away as North Carolina and even from New Zealand, calling for clemency for Wood.

On Aug. 16, almost 100 people supporting Wood marched on the Capitol in Austin. At the rally, many tourists touring the Capitol signed petitions. A couple from Australia signed and told how in Australia they do not use capital punishment. Rally speakers were from the Texas Moratorium Network, the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, Texas Students Against the Death Penalty and the Campaign to End the Death Penalty. Capital X did a rap he had written about Wood.

Belated birthday cards can be sent to: Jeff Wood #999256, Polunsky Unit, 3872 FM 350 South, Livingston, TX 77351. For information, go to www.savejeffwood.com and kidsagainsthedeathpenalty@hotmail.com. □

Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

'68 then & now



The following Aug. 20th commentary was prepared for protests at the Democratic National Convention.

Onamove! Thank you, Recreate '68, for inviting me to join your efforts in

Denver to practice democracy in the shadows of the empire.

When I think of the DNC, I am reminded of the words of the great French writer Voltaire who when speaking of the Holy Roman Empire quipped, "It was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire."

The Democratic National Committee is neither democratic, nor national, nor a committee. If it were democratic, why would it reject the voices of the people who protest against its rule? If it were national, it wouldn't be driven by imperialist and globalist corporate interests. And if it were truly a committee, then anybody could join it, not just the political puppets of corporate power.

In 1968 a Democratic mayor named Daley unleashed brutal, vicious cops on people who dared protest against the atrocities in Vietnam, young folks who were allegedly protected under the constitution. Instead they got the crap beaten out of them. It was imperial war then and it is imperial war now, and only the names and faces have changed.

In fact, things are more repressive today than they were in '68. For then anti-war activists and students could march through the streets. They got their asses whipped, but at least they marched.

Today, city governments have built cages for protests—so much for respect for the constitution. Now, as in LA 2000, you can get your ass whipped in a cage. That is what democracy looks like in 2008.

For another idea, look at what Pakistan did a few days ago. When a head of state violated the constitution, the people took to the streets. When he brought out the troops, they continued to protest and they demanded impeachment. There, democracy forced a dictator to resign. There, democracy marches—Onamove.

Here, democracy is in cages, hidden in the boondocks while alleged representatives sell their soul to the highest corporate bidder to further the interests of imperial war. Here, politicians take the label of democrat, hire the cops to beat you, hire the media to slander you, so that they can send your children to war for oil pipelines or to protect foreign dictators.

Here, democracy is on life-support, while paid-for politicians give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to imperialism, rampant globalization and ravaging of the poor.

Our revered ancestor Frederick Douglass said, "Power concedes nothing without demand; it never has and never will." Your protests are in that great, proud rebellious spirit. We need more.

Onamove. Long live John Africa! From Death Row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Go to www.prisonradio.org and www.millions4mumia.org, respectively, to listen to Mumia's commentaries and read updates on his legal and political case.



the oppressed of every political and human right. What right is left but to rebel?

But his fellow prisoner Ruchell Magee has charged that the racist guards shot George Jackson in cold blood in his own cell. Thus his murder, in addition to being a tragic loss to all revolutionaries, is one of the most heinous crimes and frame-ups in the blood-soaked history of this repressive system. □

A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE JACKSON

This past Aug. 21 marked the 37th anniversary of the assassination of Black Panther leader and political prisoner, George Jackson, in San Quentin Prison by prison guards. His death was an important spark for the heroic Attica Prison uprising in upstate New York just one month later, which helped to expose inhumane conditions in U.S. prisons, which still exist today. The following article, "George Jackson: A note on his life," first appeared in the Aug. 31, 1971, issue of Workers World.

GEORGE JACKSON was born September 23, 1941, in the heart of Chicago's ghetto. Having moved to Los Angeles, he was 15 when shot six times by L.A. police and sent to a juvenile prison for seven months for allegedly attempting to remove goods from a department store. From then on, his life became a series of run-ins with racist U.S. "justice."

In 1960, George was accused of robbing \$70 from a gas station. Convinced by the district attorney to cop a plea for a light sentence, he pleaded guilty and was instead given a one year to life imprisonment. He was 18 then. Eleven years later George Jackson was still in jail, most of the time locked up in maximum security.

During that time his readings extended from Shakespeare to Mao, writing constantly, training himself legally and physically, teaching his fellow inmates to read and write, bringing the political message of Black liberation to his people. His respect and influence among the other inmates grew to such an extent that prison officials felt that their rule through terror was being threatened and finally he, along with John Clutchette and Fleeta Drumgo, was accused of killing

a guard in retaliation for the murder of three Black prisoners who were gunned down in the prison yard by a guard firing from a tower.

All pleaded their innocence, George Jackson becoming the outstanding spokesman of the Soledad Brothers, as they came to be called. George was looking forward to the trial. He planned to use his public appearances in court to expose the vicious brutality of the U.S. prison system as well as the overall racist oppression of the Black community in the U.S. To prevent him from doing just that, on August 21 George Jackson was murdered by prison guards. Even if it were true, as the authorities charge, that Jackson was attempting escape, he was justified in seeking freedom from his racist captors by any means necessary. The prison system deprives



‘LOW-WAGE CAPITALISM’

Labor struggles since 1980 and strategies for the coming period

Following is Part 2 of a paper by Fred Goldstein, a member of Workers World Party’s Secretariat, submitted as a contribution to the discussion of the 17th International Communist Seminar held in Brussels, Belgium, on May 16-18. It is a summary of the third and concluding section of a book entitled “Low-Wage Capitalism, Colossus with Feet of Clay,” soon to be published.

Part 1 of the paper, which appeared in the last issue of Workers World, concluded with a survey of the forces in the U.S. that could serve as a basis for a resurgence of the class struggle, including 15 million workers in organized labor and another 50 million workers who want to join unions.

This potential force includes the masses of unorganized workers, the underemployed, and the unemployed struggling to survive. It includes the communities of workers and their families being devastated by home foreclosures and evictions; the groups that have been fighting for immigrant rights; the “living wage” movement; the struggles for universal health care; activists fighting homelessness and demanding affordable housing; neighborhood groups fighting to improve the schools.

It also includes the anti-war movement; groups fighting to save the environment from devastation by corporate polluters; and opponents of police brutality, the death penalty and the prison-industrial complex.

Above all, class unity can only be attained by supporting the thousands of groups around the country—local, regional and national—that have been fighting against racism and national oppression, sexism and gender oppression.

Plant occupations and the right to a job

New strategies and tactics are needed for the crisis. The question is how to put a stop to the present bloodletting of layoffs by the bosses. The issue before the working class and the unions especially is: do workers have a right to their jobs? As the creators of the wealth of the bosses, do they not have equity, do they not have property rights to the wealth that they have created? By what right can they be deprived of that property?

The labor of the workers has created the wealth that has been invested and reinvested over and over again to create the plants, the offices, the mines, the hospitals, etc. Having created all this property, workers should have a property right to their jobs. In simpler terms, workers have “sweat equity” in their jobs and in the workplace as well.

Workers have every right to prevent the bosses from depriving them of their jobs. This is simply workers defending their property rights. The right to occupy a workplace to prevent closings and layoffs must be established as a fundamental right of the working class. Possession of the plants should be viewed as nothing more than asserting the property rights of the creators of the wealth that built those plants. The capital of the owners is nothing more than accumulated labor of the workers, for which the workers have not been paid. Seen in this light, the seizure of the workplace by the workers in defense of their jobs is nothing more than their laying claim to property that they have created.

Challenging the capital-labor framework

In order to fight management, it is necessary to reject the ideological framework of management. Even within the framework of the capitalist system, the workers in their present situation cannot move forward in any significant way unless they challenge the labor-capital framework. The workers will have to challenge some of the basic prerogatives of capital and the ideology of the supremacy of the capitalist market and the rights of capitalist property. Indeed, when the UAW workers seized the plants in Flint, Mich., when the hundreds of thousands of workers carried out successful sit-downs in 1936 and 1937, they challenged the property rights of the bosses. It was the only way they could win.

Over the past three decades, the bosses have been using the argument of the need to “remain competitive” as their wedge against the workers in the struggle for concessions. However, in the unfolding economic crisis, their argument for “competitiveness” may be superseded by their assertion that shutdowns and layoffs are necessary because the company must maintain profitability and prevent losses.

The question of profitability must be subordinated to the right of the workers to jobs and income. The workers have the right to take over their workplaces and operate them with government or corporate subsidies, if necessary. Workers have the right to demand jobs programs to deal with their crisis as a class.

The capitalist government gives hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidies to the military-industrial complex, to corporate firms for research and development, to build infrastructure for corporations, and so on. Workers have a right to demand that this largesse, this charity to the corporations, be redirected to meet the needs of the workers in a crisis.

When the capitalist system utterly fails

to meet the most elementary needs of survival for millions of workers, then the workers have the right to deal with the crisis by defying capitalist methods and beginning to establish their own legal rights and their own power on the ground. This will require struggle but it will also demand that the workers get beyond the basic assumptions of capitalism so that their struggle can be effective.

To continue with the question of class-conscious ideology, consider the universal argument of the capitalist class against the workers about the need “to remain competitive.” Why do the bosses constantly bring this up in labor negotiations (assuming the workers have a union)? It is a clear statement that the one who wins the capitalist competition is the one with the lowest labor costs. Thus, in order for the capitalist in company A to beat out the capitalist in company B, the workers in company A have to out-compete the workers in company B by allowing their wages to be cut below the others.

Accepting the bosses’ notion that labor must subordinate its demands to the overriding necessity of capital to remain competitive and profitable is a self-defeating ideology. The workers cannot be guided by it. Such arguments completely tie the fate of the workers to the perils of the capitalist market.

To unravel this problem ideologically, it is first necessary to restate the fundamental Marxist truth that the substance of profit is surplus value. And surplus value consists of unpaid labor. Profits are directly proportional to the unpaid labor of the workers. Higher profits mean that more surplus value is extracted from the hides of the workers. If the workers are paid more for their labor, the profits of the bosses are lowered proportionally. This absolutely reciprocal relationship is what lies behind the irreconcilable antagonism between workers and bosses.

To hold the workers responsible for the profitability of capital is to demand that they agree to intensify their own exploitation to solve the crisis of their exploiters. If this is explained to the workers, they can easily comprehend it.

There are times when concessions may have to be given, because the situation is very unfavorable for the workers. But the idea that concessions must be made so the boss can be “more competitive” chains the fate of the workers to the capitalist market.

The question should be posed: Why must the exploited sacrifice their wages, their benefits, their working conditions and their very jobs in order to maintain the continuous prosperity of the exploit-

ers, who have lived off the wealth created by the workers in the first place?

Class-consciousness and the fightback

The strategy of class-wide fightback, concepts such as a right to a job and the right to occupy workplaces, the need for international class solidarity with oppressed workers around the world and the need for the workers to see themselves as a world class united by their common exploitation—such concepts cannot be spontaneously arrived at. The intervention of a class-conscious revolutionary vanguard that understands and can promote the ultimate goal of getting rid of exploitation altogether, abolishing capitalism, is indispensable to the struggle.

It was Lenin, the architect of the first successful socialist revolution in history, who fought for this conception at the beginning of the 20th century. He argued for the creation of a revolutionary party, which became known as the Bolshevik Party.

Lenin argued strenuously for bringing socialist, political class-consciousness to the workers as a highly important task, along with carrying on economic agitation, strikes and demonstrations. He put forward all this in the groundbreaking pamphlet “What Is to Be Done?” written in 1902.

Socialism the only way out

Nothing can change the facts about the overriding contradiction governing all of modern society. This contradiction is between, on the one hand, the private ownership of the world’s vast means of production by a tiny minority of fabulously wealthy corporate financiers who operate the entire system for profit and, on the other, the highly developed, interdependent, socialized, global production process set in motion 24 hours a day by the labor of the world’s working class under increasingly onerous conditions.

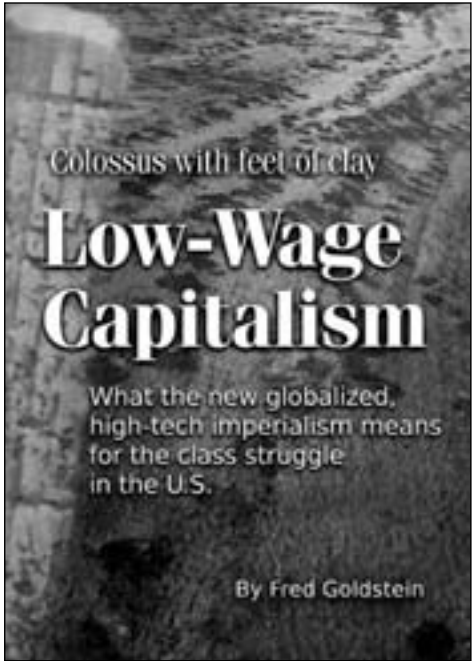
Nothing can change the fact that capitalism has entered a new stage in which more and more layers of the working class are pushed into conditions of poverty and near poverty and face job loss, eviction, foreclosure, hunger, health crises—all clearly arising out of the capitalist profit system.

It is scientifically correct to assert that socialism is the antithesis of capitalism, and is its only form of negation. There is no other historically possible resolution of capitalism’s fundamental contradictions. Socialized production must be brought into correspondence with socialized ownership, thus enabling the socially planned use of the world’s productive and natural resources.

Imperialism in the age of the scientific revolution is expanding and deepening exploitation and oppression on an unprecedented scale. What is referred to as “globalization” is in fact the expanded export of capital and the use of cutthroat trade by giant transnational corporations to pile up huge profits at the expense of the people of the world. In short, it is a phase of intensification and widening of the imperialist plunder of the globe.

This process of expanded global exploitation, which is proceeding at breakneck speed due to modern high technology, has profound consequences at home and abroad and is rapidly developing the groundwork for the next phase of the world historic struggle for socialism.

“Low-Wage Capitalism” will be published this fall. For information and to donate to the cost of publication, contact the publisher: World View Forum, 55 W. 17th St., 5th floor, New York, NY 10011.



Coming soon

Low-Wage Capitalism

“Low-Wage Capitalism” by Fred Goldstein describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx’s law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval. The analysis rests on three basic developments in the last three decades:

- The world’s workforce available to exploitation by transnational capitalist corporations doubled in the wake of the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe.
- The technological revolutions of the digital age, in both production and communications, have allowed transnational corporations to destroy high-wage jobs and simultaneously expand the global workforce to generate a worldwide wage competition.
- The decline in the economic condition of the workers, driven by the laws of capitalism and the capitalist class, is leading to the end of working-class compromise and retreat and must end up in a profound revival of the struggle against capital.

World View Forum, 55 W. 17th St., NY, NY 10011 212.463.7146

After activists stop eviction

Campaign builds for moratorium march

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Momentum is building for the Sept. 17 march on the State Capitol in Lansing, Mich. The action will demand immediate passage of SB 1306, a two-year foreclosure moratorium bill introduced in the State Senate. The bill would give immediate relief to tens of thousands of working families throughout Michigan.

Sponsored by State Sen. Hansen Clarke, SB 1306 would put a two-year halt on sheriff sales and foreclosure redemption periods for those about to lose their homes. Under the proposed law, courts would set reasonable payment plans for homeowners, based in part on their income and ability to pay.

Activists with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions have begun a campaign to force State Sen. Randy Richardville, chair of the State Senate Banking and Financial Services Committee and vice-chair of the Committee on Economic Development and Regulatory Reform, to move the bill out of the banking committee where it has languished since its introduction last spring.

Organizers sent Richardville a certified letter on Aug. 19 requesting that he immediately begin public hearings on SB 1306 and hear testimony from those most affected by the foreclosure crisis. They requested that Richardville convene a mass public hearing on Sept. 17, when hundreds of moratorium activists and foreclosure victims will be at the Capitol.

Coalition organizers asked Richardville to respond to their letter in writing within seven days. If no satisfactory response is forthcoming, they plan to step up the struggle for public hearings with demonstrations, e-mail blitzes and other tactics. Stated one activist, "On Sept. 17 in Lansing there will be a public outpouring of support for SB 1306. Richardville and the other politicians won't be able to ignore the people's voice."

Activists and family savor victory

On Aug. 22, Coalition activists and community supporters gathered at the home of Rubie Curl-Pinkins on Holden Street in Detroit. They celebrated the hard-fought victory that saved Ms. Pinkins' home from foreclosure by Countrywide Bank. After two militant demonstrations in late July, including one outside Countrywide's parent company, Bank of America, in downtown Detroit, the lender was forced to back down and stop the foreclosure and eviction



WW PHOTO

Activists celebrate at the saved home of Rubie Curl-Pinkins, third from left.

of this disabled senior and her family.

At the front-yard victory rally and press conference, Nikki Curl, Ms. Pinkins' daughter, thanked everyone for the support and dedication shown in the struggle to save her mother's home. Coalition activists also spoke about various aspects of the moratorium campaign. Many reiterated that it was the people united in struggle that prevented a huge corporation from stealing Ms. Pinkins' home and how this fight must continue until all

foreclosures are stopped.

Coalition activists are planning to do major outreach and literature distributions on Labor Day weekend in Detroit and elsewhere in Michigan. Organizer Kim Greene reports that the Coalition's office at Central United Methodist Church in downtown Detroit is abuzz with activity. In addition to making phone calls, faxing, e-mailing and updating mailing lists, activists go out daily to pass out leaflets and frequently hold demonstrations

at 36th District Court, a foreclosure mill that rubberstamps the banks' and lenders' theft of people's homes.

Much needed donations can be sent to the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, 23 E. Adams, 4th Floor, Detroit, MI 48226. Volunteers can stop by the office during the week from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. To get involved in this struggle and for bus information from Detroit to the Sept. 17 action in Lansing, call 313-887-4344 or visit moratorium-mi.org. □

Prospects for labor to lead foreclosure fight

By Jerry Goldberg

An important meeting in Los Angeles on July 26 launched a Labor/Community Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions. Does this gathering portend an opportunity for a revival of the labor and working-class struggle in the U.S.?

The meeting was built by an alliance of neighborhood and community organizations with Service Employees Local 721, the second largest SEIU local in California with over 88,000 members. The local's Latino and African-American caucuses spearheaded the union's involvement.

An organizer from Michigan with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions was invited to speak. He showed a video of a neighbor-

hood rally which helped stop a foreclosure by Countrywide Bank of a disabled senior in Detroit. He discussed SB 1306, a bill introduced in Michigan for a two-year moratorium or halt on all foreclosures. The organizer explained how this bill was modeled on 1930s legislation that imposed moratoriums on foreclosures in 25 states and was upheld as constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The meeting adopted the demand for a moratorium on foreclosures as the central program for the Labor/Community Coalition. It called for a Sept. 17 march on the Los Angeles City Council to coincide with the Sept. 17 demonstration scheduled at the State Capitol in Lansing, Mich.

Rosie Martinez, a leader of the Latino Caucus who chaired the meeting on behalf

of SEIU Local 721, was energized by the strength of the labor/community alliance filling the union hall. She announced, "What we need is a Millions March Against Foreclosures!" Martinez repeated this demand throughout the meeting as she became more inspired by the potential for fightback.

Is Rosie Martinez onto something? Is a Millions March Against Foreclosures, led by the union movement in alliance with community organizations nationwide, just what is needed to revive the labor movement in the current period?

Today the working class as a whole is in crisis. According to the Economic Policy Institute, the official unemployment rate rose to 5.7 percent in July 2008, up a full

Continued on page 10

Public housing workers tell bosses: 'Stop the firings, no privatizing'

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

In response to numerous firings of employees for petty infractions, members of AFSCME Local 1355 and supporters held a spirited picket line on Aug. 22 outside the administrative offices of Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority.

For months CMHA has been terminating maintenance workers, particularly workers over 40 and those legitimately absent under the Family Medical Leave Act. In one case a man with 22 years' seniority was fired after making a three-minute emergency phone call during normal working hours. He had actually clocked out to make the call and clocked back in after the call was finished.

"CMHA Human Resources is a kan-

garoo court," charged David Patterson, president of Local 1355, during the protest. "Under the pretext of unbiased disciplinary evaluation, [it] has routinely and blindly accepted management's accusations as fact, irrespective of witnesses refuting supervisory allegations." Patterson's comments were met with interjections of "Fight, fight, fight!"

This latest conflict is an outgrowth of the struggle to get CMHA to pay its skilled maintenance workers a decent wage. The union has repeatedly called on CMHA to pay the prevailing wage as mandated by the U.S. Housing Act of 1937. At present even workers with decades of service make less than \$15 an hour, significantly less than workers doing similar jobs in surrounding counties.

Local 1355 was prepared to strike last

year over the prevailing wage issue, but in the end accepted a less-than-satisfactory contract after CMHA threatened to permanently replace the primarily African-American workforce.

While long-term workers are getting pink slips, their shoes are being filled by even lower-paid employees of outside private contractors. Thus, the union contends the bogus disciplinary procedures are part of a bigger scheme to privatize public housing in Cuyahoga County.

Because the fear of retaliation is so high, the majority of CMHA maintenance workers did not attend this initial protest. To dramatize the extent of management intimidation, union members wore masks at the protest. To also add a bit of levity to a harsh situation, the masks bore photographic likenesses of CMHA CEO

George Philips and Chief of Staff Jeffrey Patterson.

While the demonstrators were standing outside CMHA offices chanting, they were suddenly confronted by Cleveland and CMHA police. Although they were assembled on the sidewalk, a Cleveland police officer tried to tell them they "needed a permit to protest." Knowing they had a right to maintain a moving picket line without a permit, the group immediately started picketing, chanting "Freedom of speech!" and "First amendment rights!" The police backed off, but at least eight CMHA police cruisers remained parked alongside the protest area until the action ended.

Local 1355 was joined by the Peoples Fightback Center, Black on Black Crime, Inc. and Stop Targeting Ohio's Poor. □

Fatal beating of Mexican sparks anti-ICE nationwide protests

By Cheryl LaBash

On Aug. 22 demonstrations in many U.S. cities demanded an immediate moratorium on raids, incarcerations, deportations and separation of immigrant families. The urgent call responded to the racist killing of 25-year-old Luis Ramírez and plans by ICE/Homeland Security to dragnet half a million people in the next six months.

Ramírez was beaten to death by three white high school football players in Shenandoah, Penn., near Hazelton, Penn., a town notorious for enacting virulent anti-immigrant laws. At the Aug. 18 arraignment for the accused killers, where the charges were reduced from first degree to third degree murder, demonstrators gathered outside the Schuylkill County, Penn., courthouse to demand justice for the slain Mexican immigrant.

Teresa Gutierrez, a leader of the May 1 Coalition for Immigrant and Worker Rights, who traveled from New York City, told WNEP-TV, "No one has the right to be judge, jury and executioner on the streets of this country, no matter the legal status of any Latino or other immigrant."

Emma Lozano, who traveled from Chicago with a delegation of young pink-bettered Latinas, said: "That's why we're here. We're here to say the hate's got to stop. We're here to battle the hate, not to battle individuals or a race or a color of people, just the hate."

The nationwide protests were organized as a result of a call from Latinas, a Chicago-based group of women including Emma Lozano, Flor Crisostomo and Elvira Arellano, and Familia Latina Unida/SIN FRONTERAS. Arellano is a Chicago airport worker who took sanctuary



New York City

in a church there for more than a year to draw attention to the cruel separation of immigrant families. She was deported to Mexico after leaving sanctuary. Crisostomos is now in sanctuary in the same Chicago church.

According to a statement issued from Mexico by Elvira Arellano on Aug. 25, the demands for the moratorium were raised in fourteen U.S. cities, as well as Mexico City.

In New York City, the May 1 Coalition for Immigrant and Worker Rights held a picket/press conference at the ICE Processing Center in lower Manhattan.

In Chicago, a new ¡Ya Basta! Coalition gathered with Congressman Luis Gutierrez and over a dozen Latin@ elected officials and delegates to the Democratic National Convention. One by one the delegates pledged to bring the demand for a moratorium to all the delegations at the DNC.

From Mexico City, Mexico, in a moving moment, the mother of Luis Ramírez called to address the crowd and the press in Chicago over a speakerphone. "I just want justice for my son," she said, surrounded by supporters at the press conference supporting the demand for a moratorium.

In Detroit, more than 30 picketers appeared at the Detroit Homeland Security ICE office. Latinos Unidos and Pro-Immigrant Awareness spearheaded the Detroit action. It was supported by members of Centro Obrero, Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Human Rights (Ann Arbor), the Rev. Bill Wylie-Kellerman and non-immigrant organizations including the Michigan Emergency Committee



WW PHOTOS: HEATHER COTTIN, JOHN CATALINOTTO, ALAN POLLOCK

Above, Chicago group, Latinas, in Pottsville, protesting racist killing of Luis Ramírez.



Detroit

Against War and Injustice (MECAWI), BAMN (By Any Means Necessary), the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST)—Cleveland chapter and the National Lawyers Guild.

In Los Angeles, more than forty people picketed the downtown Federal Building.

In Portland, Ore., Jobs with Justice co-issued a press release endorsing the Aug. 22 moratorium demands and urging supporters to contact delegates. Gatherings also occurred in Philadelphia and Houston. □

From El Salvador to the U.S.

A journey in support of immigrant rights

By Heather Cottin
New York

Thirty-nine-year-old José Mario Castellón Leiva left El Salvador on his bicycle this past May 31. Since then, he has ridden through Guatemala, Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Washington, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York, and is now on his way to California on a mission; a mission to defend immigrant rights.

Castellón moved to the U.S. in 1997 and worked as a cabinet installer in Dallas, Texas. He sent his remittances to his family in El Salvador. One night, while watching television, Castellón saw a child whose parents had been arrested and deported. "Who will speak for the children? Who will defend us?" cried the little boy.

The Texas police, working with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), were raiding everywhere. To date ICE has deported an estimated 286,000 immigrants this year and has vowed to ramp up the raids.

Castellón was galvanized into action. Being a national cyclist, who originally migrated to the U.S. on his bicycle, he decided he had to do something to protest the separation of thousands of immigrant parents and their children, a policy which deprives those children of love and security.



WW PHOTO: HEATHER COTTIN

Mario Castellón in New York.

He boarded a bus back to El Salvador and then asked his spouse Roxanna if he could ride through the U.S. with a message: Stop the raids and deportations! Stop the destruction of families! She said yes.

Hailed by immigrants living in fear of raids in every town he passed through, Castellón has become a symbol of the struggle against what many are now calling the gestapo tactics of the Department of Homeland Security.

Demonized nightly in attacks by media demagogues Lou Dobbs and Glenn Beck, immigrants live in a nightmare of insecurity.

"I ride under the sun and the rain for my people," said Castellón. "I will ride 10,000 more miles to raise people's consciences about this terrible crime. I feel I have to do this for humanity," Castellón told Workers World.

Corporate greed breeds poverty, displacement

Mario Castellón was forced to leave his homeland because unemployment in El Salvador was approaching 65 percent. Because U.S. companies have undermined the country's declining economy, millions of farmers were thrown off the land and ended up in the cities, where the "maquilas," the foreign-owned factories, pay \$25.00 per week. What is happening in El Salvador is happening in Mexico, Senegal, the Philippines, and everywhere that imperialism is imposing its "free trade" policies. But while capital can move freely across borders, people cannot.

Mario Castellón's heroic journey has been chronicled in the Latin@ press in every state through which he has ridden.

When he came to New York, the May 1 Coalition for Immigrant and Worker Rights welcomed him with open arms, and the Salvadoran community on Long Island organized a network to help fund his journey, and to support his five-year-old son back in El Salvador.

So Mario Castellón's fightback is significant. "I met a little boy in North Carolina who said that now he feels a little less afraid, 'because someone is fighting for me.'"

On Aug. 22, in Detroit, Chicago, San Diego, San Francisco, Houston and New York, immigrant rights activists protested in front of ICE offices against the raids and deportations. Mario Castellón joined the May 1 Coalition's New York City action with his bicycle, preparing for the next lap of his journey, which will take him to Chicago. "I do not feel so alone," he said to WW. "I know now there is a whole movement behind me."

People wishing to help Mario Castellón in his journey or to have him come to their town should contact Carlos at 516-582-2720. □

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Cindy Sheehan



Glenn Spagnuolo



Cynthia McKinney



Fred Hampton, Jr.



Kathleen Cleaver



Larry Hales

As Democrats meet

Activists take to Denver streets against war, racism

By LeiLani Dowell and Dustin Langley
Denver

Aug. 26—A series of rallies, marches, teach-ins and cultural events have taken place in the first two days of people's resistance to the Democratic Party during its national convention in Denver.

The events, organized primarily by the Recreate 68 Alliance (<http://recreate68.com>), have called attention to the Democratic Party's complicity in imperialist wars abroad and racism, poverty and oppression in the United States. Thousands of activists, many of them youth, are participating in the week of activities.

Protesters have challenged right-wingers who also arrived in Denver this week. Women's groups have defended abortion clinics, and bigots like the anti-lesbian/gay/bi/trans Rev. Fred Phelps have been shouted down by activists.

Cultural performances have been an integral component of the week's events, with all-day, free concerts featuring spoken word, Hip Hop, folk, rock and punk music. Food Not Bombs has provided free food to participants.

The effective organization of this week of action has been evident in the success of the events, despite continuing police and state harassment and intimidation of protesters (see accompanying article). As social services for the people of Denver have been slashed, the state received \$50 million in federal funds for convention "security," which is reflected in the high-tech riot gear and weapons worn by the thousands of police who surround the protesters daily.

March to end all occupations

The mobilization began on Aug. 24 with a March to End All Occupations at Home



PHOTOS: TONC

Pam Africa speaking at rally for political prisoners, Aug. 25.

and Abroad. A lineup of multinational speakers denounced the anti-worker, imperialist policies of both the Democratic and Republican parties. Many stressed the necessity for a revolution to abolish the entire capitalist system.

Glenn Spagnuolo of Recreate 68 Alliance saluted the courage and determination of those who had come to Denver from as far as Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Florida and Maine.

Larry Hales of Recreate 68 Alliance and the youth group FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) called for unconditional solidarity with the struggles of all oppressed people. Congressional candidate Cindy Sheehan warned against new U.S. military actions in Georgia and Russia.

Larry Holmes, a national leader of the Troops Out Now Coalition, celebrated the call to "Recreate 68," saying that reviving 1968 spirit of militant struggle is necessary as the attacks on workers at home and abroad increase.

Cynthia McKinney, Green Party presi-

dential candidate, spoke of the continuing U.S. government neglect faced by survivors of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Former Black Panther Kathleen Cleaver addressed the Bush administration's misuse of the term "terrorism," saying that African-American communities have been victims of terrorism for more than 400 years.

Activist and author Ward Churchill denounced the theft of Native lands, noting the continuing U.S. policy of land theft in the Middle East. Palestinian refugee Ida Audeh described the horrific conditions faced by the people of Gaza.

Ron Kovic, disabled Vietnam veteran and author of "Born on the Fourth of July," said, "I'll be damned if I let another young person be sent to war and come home like this."

Well-known activists and Hip Hop performers dead prez closed the rally, introduced by Rosa Clemente, Green Party vice presidential candidate, who spoke of the power of Hip Hop as an organizing and educational tool.

Cops attack protesters at DNC

Emergency news conference exposes gov't terror

Continued from page 1

shared water and made sure everyone was okay. We continued chanting and singing. At one point, we sang 'Solidarity Forever'. One group of activists chanted at the cops: 'Who do you protect? Who do you serve?'

After more than an hour, the solidarity of those on the streets and negotiations by Recreate 68 organizers won the release of most of those trapped on the block.

At least 85, however, were placed in metal shackles and arrested. They were denied access to attorneys while at the detention center, and many were bullied into making a guilty plea in order to get released. Martin said, "Now, because of the plea bargain, I'm free but on probation. I can't join any more marches, or do anything illegal in the next six months, or I'll get five days in jail on top of the other charges."

The next day the police continued their attempts to intimidate those protesting the DNC. Heavily-armed police continued to mass around the park, and squads of horse-mounted cops rode through the park several times.

At about 9 a.m., the right-wing bigot Fred Phelps entered the park, spewing a homophobic hate speech. A Recreate 68 organizer, Carlo Garcia, told him to leave. The Denver police responded by arresting Garcia, who has two brothers in Iraq.

When Code Pink organizer Alicia Forrest questioned Garcia's arrest, she was knocked to the ground by police and arrested as well.

Organizers with the Recreate 68 Alliance and TONC called an emergency press conference in front of police headquarters to take a public stand against these tactics and respond to distortions in the corporate media, which portrayed the protesters as the initiators of violence.

Glenn Spagnuolo, one of the cofounders of the Recreate 68 Alliance, put the mayor, police chief and Denver Police Department on notice that he and other organizers are meeting with attorneys to move forward with legal action. He noted several major protest-related lawsuits, such as those in New York and Washington, which have cost local governments millions of dollars.

No democracy in Denver

Larry Hales, a leader of the Recreate 68 Alliance and of the youth group FIST (Fight Imperialism Stand Together), noted that any violence that has occurred was initiated by the Denver police. Recreate 68 demands all police be removed from the park. Hales stated that since Recreate 68 has a permit to hold its activity in the Civic Center Park, the police have no business there.

Other speakers at the press conference included Brian Vicente of the Peoples Law Project; Ben Kaufman, who described the arrest of Carlo Garcia; Sally Newman of Code Pink; and Mark Cohen, a Recreate 68 cofounder, who questioned the role of the Democratic Party in suppressing civil liberties and attempting to silence protest.

Following the press conference, organizers returned to Civic Center Park, where they joined hundreds of activists from around the country determined to continue in the spirit of resistance and protest.

More coverage and analysis on developments at the DNC as well as the Republican National Convention will appear in upcoming WW issues.

The rally was followed by a militant march through the streets of Denver, including a strong contingent in opposition to a war against Iran. When the protesters reached the Pepsi Center, thousands of them faced off with police, blocking one of the entrances and holding the street for more than 45 minutes.

Free them all!

The next day, Aug. 25, was dedicated to political prisoners, as well as the millions of workers, disproportionately people of color, locked up by the prison/industrial complex. An energetic march took to the streets, without a police permit, winding its way down the 16th Street Mall, a main tourist and shopping attraction in the city. A street vendor threw up his fist and shouted "Free Mumia!" as activists passed by.

The march ended at Denver's federal courthouse, where a rally featured the leaders of various struggles to free political prisoners. A moving letter to the mobilization from Leonard Peltier, a Native political prisoner who has been locked up for more than 30 years, was read; and a recorded statement from death-row political prisoner and award-winning journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal was played.

Speakers at the rally included Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; Kathleen Cleaver, representing the case of former Panthers known as the San Francisco 8; King Downing, national coordinator of the ACLU's Campaign against Racial Profiling; Chairman Fred Hampton Jr. of the Prisoners of Conscience Committee; Gloria La Riva of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five; and more.

Many more activities are planned for the remainder of the week, including direct actions to protect the environment, a march for immigrant rights, performances by Public Enemy and Rage Against the Machine, and forums on a number of other important topics.

The last event on Recreate 68's list of activities takes place on Aug. 29—when buses will leave from Denver to transport activists to St. Paul, Minn., to protest at the Republican National Convention. □



Larry Holmes and Ron Kovic at Aug. 24 anti-war march.

New Paraguayan president vows to fight inequality

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Fernando Lugo Méndez was sworn in as president of the Republic of Paraguay on Aug. 15. His electoral party, formed by the union of various organizations whose political ideology ranges from center left to right, is called the Patriotic Alliance for Change. Lugo ran against former President Nicanor Duarte of the Colorado Party.

The victory of the PAC effectively ends 61 years of control by the Colorados, a party of the elite that kept Paraguay in a state of permanent corruption and misery for the majority of the population. According to sources, 60 percent live below the poverty level in this country of almost seven million people.

Targeted for defending human rights

Lawyers in Colombia seek int’l solidarity

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world for labor leaders. However, very little is known about the judicial system and the lawyers who defend the victims of human rights abuses. Once a lawyer takes a case of violation by paramilitaries or by the state, he or she becomes a target for threats and even assassination.

This not only puts in peril the lives of lawyers and their families but is a de facto denial of access to legal representation for victims, at a time when massacres by paramilitaries with state support are being uncovered but remain in complete impunity.

Until he resigned his post in 2006, Lugo had been a Catholic bishop working in a poor community, where he practiced the teachings of liberation theology. The popular cleric left the church position to get more involved in politics and run for president.

Lugo delivered the first few sentences of his inaugural speech in Guaraní, an Indigenous language and the second official language of the country. Thanks to a live broadcast of the inauguration by TeleSur, the world was able to watch the complete ceremony and hear Lugo’s moving and poetic words.

His speech delineated the program Lugo wants to implement. Without rhetoric, he spoke to millions of Paraguayans who

have been excluded from society, many of whom have been forced to emigrate for lack of jobs. The speech was directed to them and to the Indigenous, the peasants and to children living on the streets.

Excerpts from Lugo’s speech

“Today an exclusive Paraguay, a secretive Paraguay, a Paraguay with a reputation for corruption, ends; today the history begins of a Paraguay whose authorities will be implacable against the thieves who [prey upon] its people.

“Compatriots: We today begin the intensity of our task: collective leadership. We dream of a socially just Paraguay. Where never again such inequality will exist that turns people against each other. So much inequality, that it generates satiety and hunger at the same time.

“We must say it: The greatest social and political investment of this government will be reflected in a very simple figure: a healthy and well educated child. What other starting point could be more favorable than planting the seeds for the future?”

Starting the job

Lugo’s first day included sending a warm embrace to the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, to whom he expressed gratitude “for the Paraguayans who went to the island to become professionals.”

The following day, he met with Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez to strengthen bilateral relations and sign 12 agreements, including cooperation on energy, food security, sovereignty, education, health and communications.

Venezuela, in turn, expects that the new administration of Paraguay will approve its entrance into the Southern Common Market, Mercosur, which the Duarte government had blocked.

As a visible sign of change, Margarita Mbywangi, chief of the Ache tribe, was named minister for Indigenous affairs. Mbywangi explained she had been captured in the jungle as a little girl, enslaved and sold to perform hard work. She now promises to work to improve the lives of the Indigenous people.

In the old Paraguay, reporters were not allowed to investigate corruption in the government. Now a new department, the National Ministry of Information and Communication for Development, has been created to assure that the public gets information in a transparent manner, inaugurating an “open door” policy in terms of communication from the state.

Paraguay will now also be a part of the Cuban and Venezuelan initiative providing the New Television of the South, or TeleSur.

The new president is very hopeful that the process of regional integration sweeping the South will bring about great changes. He stated that, “When one faces unacceptable social inequalities—where an agricultural exporting sector comprising 7 percent of the total population of a country with more than 6 million inhabitants owns no less than 93 percent of the arable land, while 93 percent of the population lives on the other 7 percent—nobody can doubt that the consequences are devastating.”

A key element on the agenda of the new administration is to renegotiate the terms of its agreements with neighboring Brazil and Argentina regarding revenues from two hydroelectric dams, Itaipu and Yaciretá. These agreements were signed

under previous administrations when all three countries were subservient to imperialist financial interests. Paraguay wound up with smaller revenues.

For example, the 1973 agreement on Itaipu, which spans the Paraná River between Brazil and Paraguay and is the largest hydroelectric dam in the world, stipulated that the two countries had a 50-50 right to the generated energy. However, Paraguay is much smaller and less industrialized than its colossal neighbor. Paraguay has only used 17 percent, selling the rest to Brazil at a very disadvantageous price.

Now talks on sharing these resources are being planned between Paraguay and the governments of Brazil and Argentina. The political situation in South America has improved and, with the exception of Colombia, has been marked by solidarity and willingness to cooperate.

The task of the new Paraguayan president will not be easy. There have been decades of government corruption, starting with the infamous 35-year right-wing military dictatorship of U.S. ally Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, which ended in 1989, and continued by the Colorado Party. The Brazilian oligarchy, backed by U.S. financial interests, has stolen land and resources from Paraguay. And the PAC itself encompasses a right-wing sector. It all points to a rocky road.

However, the masses, the majority of them very poor, are the ones who will be decisive. Health and education programs are slated to begin soon with the aid of Venezuela. They will help develop and uplift the people whose lives had been shattered by misery, but whose hopes for a better future made them break with the Colorado’s corruption. They have joined the millions of dispossessed throughout Latin America who are standing up, pledging to never again let imperialism, with its new face of neoliberalism, ruin their lives.

As President Lugo said at the end of his inaugural speech: “Paraguay has awakened.” □

Closing door to peace

Arroyo escalates



Prof. Jose Maria Sison

The following statement was written by Prof. Jose Maria Sison, chief political consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines on Aug. 22.

In line with her brutal policy of suppressing the revolutionary forces of the people, [President] Gloria M. Arroyo has apparently closed the door to peace negotiations by declaring that she would negotiate with “communities” rather than with the armed revolutionary movements like the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), unless they first surrender and agree to be subjected to “disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation” under the terms of the continuing system of oppression and exploitation.

Arroyo misses the whole point about the peace negotiations as a mutually agreed process for the conflicting parties to address the roots of the armed conflict and work out agreements on social, economic and political reforms in order to realize a just and lasting peace. She is excessively obsessed with the vain wish to destroy or debilitate the armed revolu-

Message to the International Caravan of Jurists

From the United States we send greetings to the organizers and participants of the International Caravan of Jurists that takes place on Aug. 25 through 29. Unfortunately, we are unable to be present in this very important undertaking, which is so crucial at this time to expose the dangerous situation that Colombian lawyers face, particularly those committed to the exercise of defending human and labor rights in your country.

However, once the information gathered by the Caravan is available, we will make sure that it gets disseminated as widely as possible in the U.S.

We observe in horror, from written and audiovisual reports, how human rights are being abused under the guise of a policy called “Democratic Security,” which preserves the rights of the perpetrators more than those of the victims. How laws have been enacted, like the one euphemistically called Justice and Peace, which has brought no justice and no peace for the majority of the Colombian people, but rather impunity for the deadly paramilitaries responsible for countless massacres.

How, according to the testimony of lawyer Jorge Enrique Gómez, former ombudsman (defensor del pueblo) in Magdalena Medio, many riverbeds in Colombia are covered with the bodies of those who to this day are part of the millions “disappeared,” victims of paramilitary and state terror.

Disappearances, displacements, false positives, selective assassinations, illegal arrests, and so many more injustices and violations have not been investigated, nor the perpetrator punished. This is actually a denial of justice.

We point the finger not only at the administration of Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Vélez—who, in violation of the Basic Principles of the Function of a Lawyer, on numerous occasions has publicly accused human rights advocates of serving the cause of terrorism—but at the government of the U.S., which for decades, under Plan Colombia, has waged a war against the people of Colombia with the excuse of waging a war against drugs.

We again salute, above all, the organizers of this Caravan, who, with great risk to their and their families’ lives, have taken on this task on behalf of the peoples of Colombia.

In solidarity,

Ramsey Clark	Jeanne Mirer , Secretary General, IADL
Hon. Claudia H. Morcom , retired Wayne Cnty. Circuit Crt. Judge, member IADL, Detroit, Mich.	Julie Fry , Alternate Vice President of the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys, UAW Local 2325
Vanessa Ramos , Pres., American Jurists Assoc. (Asociación Americana de Juristas)	Jerome D. Goldberg , Esq., Detroit, Mich.
Heidi Boghosian , Ex. Dir., Nat’l Lawyers Guild	Joaquina Rodriguez , Texas attorney
Jitendra Charma , Pres, Int’l Assoc. of Democratic Lawyers (IADL)	American Association of Jurists (Asociación Americana de Juristas)
	Int’l Association of Democratic Lawyers

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Zimbabwe convenes Parliament as Negotiations continue for unity government

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Nearly two months after the runoff presidential elections in the Republic of Zimbabwe, a new Parliament has been convened amid stalled talks over the formation of a government of national unity. President Robert Mugabe, leader of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), won the second round of elections on June 27 after failing to secure a majority during the initial poll of March 29.

On Aug. 25, the opening day of Parliament, the opposition MDC-T was able to elect its representative, Lovemore Moyo, as speaker of the lower house, the National Assembly. The MDC-T had won a slight majority in the March 29 parliamentary elections—110 votes to 99 for the ZANU-PF.

However, ZANU-PF Politburo member Edna Madzongwe was elected president of the Senate, the upper house of the legislative body.

In the aftermath of the runoff election and the swearing in of Mugabe for another term as head of state, the ruling ZANU-PF launched a new political effort through a series of talks with the two opposition factions: the MDC-T headed by Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC-M, a breakaway grouping headed by Arthur Mutambara which disagreed with the leadership style of the parent body.

These talks, which have taken place periodically for the last several years, resumed with the mediation efforts of Republic of South Africa President Thabo Mbeki, who has worked during this time period on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The purpose of the talks is to reach a political settlement in Zimbabwe that would facilitate the lifting of sanctions as well as the halting of the destabilization campaign waged by Western imperialist countries over the last decade.

negotiations

brutal campaigns of suppression

tionary movements through all-out military force. This is complemented by her notion that she can use sham negotiations to trick these movements to capitulate or to paralyze them with indefinite informal talks and ceasefire.

She overestimates what she and her armed forces can do and underestimates what the people and the armed revolutionary movements can do against her regime. She is oblivious of the fact that the entire ruling system and her regime in particular are rotten to the core and are beset by a grave socioeconomic and political crisis, that her armed forces are already fatigued and demoralized by the failures and defeats of Oplan Bantay Laya, and that the armed forces of the NDFP and MILF can deliver more lethal blows to their common foes if they simultaneously intensify their offensives in their respective territories.

Indeed, it can be expected that the level of armed resistance by the revolutionary forces and people will rise on a nationwide scale because in the first place the Arroyo regime is carrying out a brutal policy of suppression and is escalating military campaigns against them. All the organized forces, institutions and people interested in the realization of a just and lasting peace through peace negotiations should press the Arroyo regime to end its brutal policy

MDC-T leader Tsvangirai stalls on signing agreement with ZANU-PF

Mbeki has recently been elected chairperson of the SADC, which has 14 member countries. This selection of Mbeki reaffirms his stature among regional peers in the subcontinent as well as the important role he has played in the quest for a political solution to the situation in Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, the Republic of Zimbabwe is chairing the peacekeeping portfolio for the SADC area, further overcoming efforts to isolate the country from its neighbors in Southern Africa as well as throughout the continent.

After weeks of negotiations between ZANU-PF, MDC-T and MDC-M, an agreement was reached in August with the smaller opposition party, the MDC-M. However, the Tsvangirai faction, the MDC-T, after giving the impression that it would sign the agreement creating a unity government, suddenly withdrew from the negotiations.

The ruling ZANU-PF party has accused Tsvangirai of deliberating sabotaging the talks under the aegis of his backers in the imperialist countries. On Aug. 22, the leader of Zimbabwe's liberation war veterans, Jabulani Sibanda, issued a statement attacking the opposition leader for acting in contravention to the interests of the country and its people.

“War veterans, who are custodians of the country's revolution, welcome the convening of Parliament set for next week,” Sibanda told the media, urging Mugabe to form a new cabinet. Mugabe announced the appointment of eight ministers on Aug. 25.

Sibanda added, “The West had engineered an impasse in the talks so that their preferred leader takes over.”

He noted that Tsvangirai continued to demand more, and the more he demand-

ed, the more Western sanctions are imposed—an attempt to compel the ruling ZANU-PF to yield to his demands.

“That is a condition that will never happen, a step that will never be taken by ZANU-PF as a party of the people of Zimbabwe,” Sibanda said.

What's at stake for the West?

It is well-known that the main opposition party in Zimbabwe is supported politically and economically by the imperialist nations of Britain and the United States, along with its allies in the European Union and some surrogate leaders on the African continent. The MDC-T has been utilized by the Western imperialist states to create the social conditions that would lead to the collapse of the ZANU-PF government and the installation of a reactionary, neo-colonialist regime.

The fact that the ZANU-PF government of President Mugabe has been able to survive a decade-long persistent campaign aimed at undermining the country's national interests, both internationally and domestically, speaks to the level of maturity and capability of the ruling party. This is the organization that evolved from the national liberation movement, fought alongside the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) for the independence of the nation in 1980, and became a political party that merged with ZAPU two decades ago. It still maintains state power today despite an international campaign to bring about its overthrow.

Consequently, if an agreement were to be reached between ZANU-PF, MDC-M and the larger MDC-T, it would pose a challenge to the imperialist countries, which have continued to claim that the exclusion of Tsvangirai and his cohorts from executive power is the major stumbling block towards achieving stability in Zimbabwe. Thus, there has been very little acknowledgement or encouragement from Britain and the U.S. regarding negotiations for a power-sharing arrangement.

What the imperialists want is the relinquishing of executive power by ZANU-PF and the transformation of the state and its institutions away from the control of the veterans of the armed struggle for national liberation and their allies. The

imperialists wish to select and structure a new political dispensation in Zimbabwe that will follow the dictates of Washington and London.

Such a defeat for the ruling ZANU-PF party would set a dangerous precedent in the region and place further pressure on the democratic revolution in South Africa to move faster in the direction of a neoliberal economic and social agenda.

Zimbabwe continues to enjoy the support of neighboring South Africa, where Mbeki has refused to follow Western requests to impose sanctions on the ZANU-PF government. In addition, ongoing support from the People's Republic of China has been essential in the state's “Look East” policy that is attempting to lessen its dependence on trade with the Western imperialist nations.

On July 11, a double veto in the United Nations Security Council by both Russia and China prevented further sanctions and possible military action against Zimbabwe by the U.S. and Britain. Just prior to the Security Council vote, Mugabe had attended an African Union summit in Egypt, where he was accepted fully by the other heads of state on the continent. The AU endorsed the continuing negotiation process that has been conducted by Mbeki.

Other countries in various regions of the continent have supported the Mugabe government. A recent visit by an envoy from the North African nation of Libya demonstrated the understanding by other progressive and revolutionary states as it relates to the process in Zimbabwe and the challenges the country is facing during the present period.

The envoy, Hafiz Mersal, “returned to Libya with a delegation of chiefs who were invited to take part in the 39th anniversary of the great Libyan revolution to be celebrated in September.” (Zimbabwe Herald, Aug. 25)

“We strongly stand with the people of Zimbabwe and their political leadership in the fight against imperialism,” Nersal said.

“The president Comrade Robert Mugabe is one of the people who brought independence to Zimbabwe and he is a liberation hero.

“We therefore understand him when he says he does not want outside meddling in the talks.

“The idea of power sharing is an African solution to African problems. Africa does not want to be dictated to and the people should come first.” □

Protest against Israel's founding

On Aug. 21, about 70 protesters challenged the “Fair to Remember” event at the Michigan State Fairgrounds in Detroit that marked the 60th anniversary of the founding of the U.S.-backed Israeli settler state, an event known in Palestine as the Nakba or the catastrophe. Protest sponsors and endorsers included the Middle East Task Force, the Michigan Peace Team, Ann Arbor Middle East Film Society and Jewish Witnesses for Peace. In an article entitled “Demonstrators protest apartheid at State Fairground,” the Arab American News quoted an organizer who was “enraged at the idea of holding a celebration of what she calls ‘the violent ethnic cleansing and



colonization of Palestine in 1948, in a poor neighborhood in Detroit.” Members of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice held

a banner with the message: “Israeli terror paid for by U.S.A. Money for our cities, not for war.”

—Report and photo by Cheryl LaBash



IRAQ: A permanent war crime

The Bush administration is making believe that it is in control in Iraq. After waging a criminal war and occupation, killing over a million Iraqis, turning five million others into refugees, destroying the infrastructure of what was previously a prosperous land and promoting that land’s division into warring groups, Washington is now trying to permanently seize the fruits of victory from a war it lost.

For U.S. imperialism did lose that war. Despite the overwhelming weight of U.S. weapons, despite the lack of support from neighboring countries, despite the lack of a safe base from which it can organize a political struggle, despite the difficulties in establishing a unified national liberation front, the Iraqi resistance has stopped the U.S. occupiers cold. There is no stable puppet government to control Iraq for U.S. imperialism. Since the 1950s the Iraqis have proven over and over that they refuse to submit to foreign rule, even when they face the best-armed military in the world. With remarkable heroism under the most difficult circumstances, they have proven this once again.

Indeed, the world owes the Iraqi people a debt. Their resistance has not only defended the honor of Iraq, it has demoralized the U.S. ground troops, stretched the volunteer U.S. Army to its limits and discouraged the Pentagon from launching further actions that involve seizing and occupying territory.

Now the U.S.-based oil giants, already raking in tens of billions of dollars each year—Exxon cleared over \$11 billion its last quarter, want privileged long-term leases to exploit Iraqi oil. The

military-industrial complex wants to continue its theft from the U.S. treasury and to continue supplying a puppet Iraqi army. And the Pentagon brass plan permanent U.S. bases. Washington wants a pact to make this exploitation permanent.

There is no way under international law that an agreement between an occupied nation and the occupying power can be considered legitimate. In June the puppet Premier Maliki agreed to the pact that would put all those rotten deals in place. But the puppet Iraqi Parliament has stalled its ratification.

No solid majority of Iraqi politicians, even in the puppet regime, seems ready to sign away Iraqi natural resources to U.S. imperialist oil firms or to just hand over Iraqi sovereignty. Perhaps that should not be a surprise. Everyone knows the contingent of 150,000 U.S. troops and about the same number of mercenaries—called “contractors” these days—will have to leave sooner or later. Iraqi traitors will then be unprotected and very unpopular.

These days, after five and a half years of occupation, news from Iraq barely makes it into the media. The bombings are rarer, so is news of casualties among U.S. troops, in part because everyone is waiting for political changes in Washington and with U.S. policy. Already 75 percent of the people oppose the war, including most soldiers. But a war crime remains a war crime, and the Bush administration is as guilty of launching a war of aggression as were the Nazi leaders in 1939. They owe the Iraqis reparations to rebuild their country, and they owe the world the satisfaction of paying for their crimes. □

Unearthing a military scandal

“Boots on the Ground By Dusk/My Tribute to Pat Tillman” By Mary Tillman with Narda Zacchino. Modern Times, 2008; go to www.leftbooks.com to order.

By Sharon Danann

If you assume that this book about former National Football League safety Pat Tillman is an ultrapatriotic eulogy, you may pass it over and miss one of the finest anti-war stories of our era. With courage and tenacity, Pat’s mother Mary Tillman broke through the lies the military told the Tillman family about his death, seeking the truth, however painful it might be.

In fact, both Mary Tillman and Pat’s father Patrick came from families which believed in military service. Mary’s father and brother were Marines. Patrick’s father and two uncles were in the Navy and were in Pearl Harbor when it was bombed.

Pat Tillman was already playing professional football for the Arizona Cardinals when 9/11 happened. Kevin Tillman was a minor league baseball player. They decided to enlist in the Army together in May 2002. Pat was celebrated by the media for his patriotic sacrifice because he was walking away from a \$3.6 million contract. Without an insider’s view such as this book, we would not know that Pat considered peace activist Rachel Corrie, who was crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer, to be his hero.

Pat and Kevin were in the same platoon when Pat was killed in Afghanistan in April 2004, but Kevin was separated from his brother and did not see what happened. As presented by the Army to the family and the public, Pat died while charging up a hill toward the enemy to protect his fellow Army Rangers. Pat was posthumously awarded a Silver Star, Purple Heart and a promotion. The military said that his death was “in the line of devastating enemy fire.”

Five weeks later, it was revealed that the cause of Pat’s death was “friendly fire.” An unofficial meeting was held with family members based on an investigation

immediately after the incident. At the first formal briefing, Mary Tillman noticed significant inconsistencies with the previous report and many questions were simply not answered.

Although Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona had spoken at Pat’s memorial service when he was a fallen hero, when Pat’s mother appealed to Sen. McCain for help in investigating the cover-up within the military, she found him less helpful.

By late 2006, Kevin’s perspective had changed dramatically. He posted an eloquent piece on Truthdig.com entitled, “After Pat’s Birthday.” To get the full impact, it really should be read in its entirety, but some excerpts follow:

“Somehow our elected leaders were subverting international law and humanity by setting up secret prisons around the world, secretly kidnapping people, secretly holding them indefinitely, secretly not charging them with anything, secretly torturing them. Somehow that overt policy of torture became the fault of a few “bad apples” in the military.

“Somehow profiting from the tragedy and horror is tolerated.

“Somehow suspension of Habeas Corpus is supposed to keep this country safe. ...

“Somehow the same incompetent, narcissistic, virtueless, vacuous, malicious criminals are still in charge of this country.”

Over a period of three years, Mary Tillman amassed thousands of pages of documents, most of which were heavily censored by the military.

In April 2007, the Senate Oversight and Government Reform Committee held hearings entitled “Misleading Information from the Battlefield.” Kevin Tillman testified, as did former Pfc. Jessica Lynch, who told the committee about the false statements the military made about her capture in Iraq in March 2003.

Kevin Tillman’s testimony, which can be viewed in CNN’s video archives, maintains that the five weeks in which the truth about his brother was suppressed was intended to prevent another political disaster during the period when the scandal about torture at the Abu Ghraib prison was the top news item.

However, neither Sen. Waxman nor the other Democrats on the committee asked the top-ranking military officials the tough questions that Mary Tillman had primed them to ask. The sanctity of the military authority went essentially unchallenged.

Although this is a heart-wrenching story of grief and betrayal, it ultimately inspires optimism. In the face of the terrible truth about what really happened to their son, Mary, Kevin and other members of the Tillman family grew and changed. And their love for each other and for Pat shone steadily throughout. □

Prospects for labor to lead foreclosure fight

Continued from page 5

point from a year ago. Underemployment rose to 10.3 percent.

Over the past year, 1.6 million workers have been added to the jobless rolls, and average work hours dropped to 33.6 hours per week for those still employed. At the same time, with inflation running four to five percent, weekly earnings rose only 2.8 percent before inflation, meaning a significant drop in wages for the working class.

Foreclosures affect all workers

During the first quarter of 2008, one in 11 homeowners faced foreclosure or fell behind in their mortgage payments. (Mortgage Bankers Association, June 2008) The number of all home loans nationwide in foreclosure or past due increased to 4.8 million. Experts state that the foreclosure crisis has yet to peak, and many adjustable rate mortgages are due to reset with higher interest in the next few years.

The foreclosure crisis was initially concentrated in subprime loans, which were a product of the racist, sexist and predatory lending practices of the banks. Now, as a result of the deepening economic decline, the crisis has spread to standard mortgages as well. When workers lose their jobs or suffer a cut in wages, they are increasingly unable to pay their mortgages. Meanwhile, the

banks and loan servicers overwhelmingly ignore calls for some relief, and government programs have proven inadequate to provide any meaningful solutions.

It is not just individuals and families facing foreclosure, who are feeling this crisis. The foreclosure epidemic is destroying neighborhoods and driving down the value of homes for all workers, whose main asset diminishes considerably with each passing day.

Even though union membership in the U.S. has declined from 33 percent of the workforce in 1960 to 12.1 percent as of 2007, there are still 15.7 million union members. The unions remain the most powerful organized force within the working class. But they have been stymied in their growth, albeit with some significant recent victories particularly in the health services, by labor laws which make successful organizing in individual worksites or industries extremely difficult. In a period of recession, organizing becomes even more difficult as workers are increasingly afraid of losing their jobs.

During this period of economic attacks on the entire working class, the potential for extending the influence of the labor movement and increasing union membership exists in the broader struggle for gains for the entire working class. The unions can assert leadership in building a movement to stop the foreclosures affecting millions. This struggle can strengthen solidarity in fighting racism and discrimi-

nation as it builds alliances to fight back against the banks and financial institutions, the epicenter of capitalism.

Rosie Martinez’s proposal for a Millions March Against Foreclosures could be just the dynamic vehicle necessary to put the union movement at the head of a new working-class coalition which will propel a resurgence of the union movement and win relief for workers around the country.

Goldberg is a UAW 900 retiree and a leader of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition in Detroit.

No U.S.-Arroyo intervention

A call for genuine peace

By Bernadette Ellorin
Secretary-General, BAYAN USA

On Aug. 21 the U.S. Chapter of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, or BAYAN USA, an alliance of 12 Filipino organizations in the United States, condemned the U.S.-backed Arroyo regime’s initiatives to engage and derail a so-called “peace process” with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, an armed group representing the self-determination interests of the Bangsamoro people concentrated in the southern region of Mindanao.

The alliance called on the U.S. government to back off from intervening in the

domestic political and economic affairs of the Philippines, once a direct U.S. colony and still heavily dependent on U.S. government influence and dictates. A U.S. institution called U.S. Institute of Peace has been facilitating so-called “peace talks” for “ancestral domain conflicts” in Mindanao, while U.S. military presence continues to increase in the region.

“At the heart of the matter is oil and land,” states BAYAN USA Chair Chito Quijano. “Mindanao land houses some of the largest oil and natural gas deposits in the Asia-Pacific region. Multinational corporate interest to acquire and control these reserves has been the real reason for

As politicians call for more troops

U.S. air strikes spark angry Afghan response

By G. Dunkel

Both the McCain and Obama campaigns have made “winning in Afghanistan” a campaign issue. However, Afghanistan is spinning out of U.S. control so quickly that the troops the politicians want to withdraw from Iraq and send there are likely to find themselves in an even more precarious situation than the imperialist occupation they’d be leaving.

The NATO coalition in Afghanistan, operating as the so-called International Security Assistance Force, has significant contingents from the United States (29,000), Great Britain (7,800), Germany (3,200), Italy (2,800), France (2,600) and Canada (2,500). Counting these and some smaller contingents, about 53,000 NATO soldiers are there. (Figures are from March 2008 on www.foreignpolicy.com.) But NATO commanders know that even this number is not enough “boots on the ground,” so they have been relying on airpower.

High-tech air strikes have been killing many Afghan civilians and turning their friends and families into active opponents of the NATO occupation—so much so that even the U.S.-installed government in Kabul has been complaining vociferously, especially about a bombing in western Afghanistan carried out on Aug. 22.

The state-owned Afghan newspaper Anis said, “The fact that the coalition forces again martyred 80 people, including women, children and men, in an arbitrary military operation” in Herat province “shows that contrary to our people’s expectations, the role of these forces has now shifted from ensuring security ... to taking the lives of civilians. The coalition forces have repeatedly carried out uncoordinated military operations in different parts of the country and caused civilian casualties.” (BBC Worldwide Monitoring, Aug. 23)

Since then, even U.S.-installed President Hamid Karzai has admitted that even more people—95, some 60 of them children—died as a result of the air raid. Karzai is feeling the heat of the people’s anger, which is being expressed in militant anti-U.S. demonstrations held despite the military occupation of their country.

Haji Tor Jan Noorzai, a survivor of this massacre, told a reporter: “The Americans are foreigners and they do not understand. These people they killed were enemies of the Taliban.” (New York Times, Aug. 23) While the NATO war in Afghanistan is supposedly against the Taliban, its neocolonial

character is becoming clearer every day.

Atrocities like the bombing in Herat are clearly aimed at breaking the people’s support for those resisting occupation. The resistance has become stronger in recent months. Three Polish soldiers, three Canadian combat engineers and one British soldier died in combat in the middle of August.

The most significant attacks on occupation forces took place Aug. 18-19 on French paratroopers about 30 miles east of Kabul in the Surobi district and on the Pentagon’s Camp Salerno near the Pakistan border.

Camp Salerno is the second-largest U.S. base in Afghanistan. The attacks began after midnight on Aug. 18 with waves of commandos attempting to blast holes in its defensive perimeter. Reportedly, they didn’t succeed.

The ambush of the French troops seems to have been much more successful for the resistance. Ten French soldiers died and 21 were seriously wounded, the largest number of casualties for the French army in a single incident since the Algerian war—another colonial catastrophe. However, Le Monde, a major French daily respected for its accuracy, published an interview with survivors who claimed that the French patrol was hit by “friendly fire”—that is, by forces led by the U.S.

The French government was afraid that this stinging defeat would further shred its standing, since President Nicolas Sarkozy has been a strong ally of George W. Bush but polls show that just 35 percent of French people support the deployment of their troops to Afghanistan.

Sarkozy left for Kabul the next day and attended the military ceremony for the dead soldiers. He arranged for their caskets to lie in state in the Invalides, the most hallowed military chapel in France, and awarded them all France’s highest decoration.

This ceremony and the funerals of the soldiers were major news in France. But when Aurore Buil, the widow of a sergeant killed in the ambush, was asked on France’s National TV2 just after her husband’s funeral why she wasn’t going to accept Sarkozy’s invitation to attend a briefing at the presidential palace, she replied, “For what? To give him publicity?”

Earlier she had told the French press that she held Sarkozy “responsible for the death of these 10 men, of my husband.” She continued, “For me, we have nothing to do in Afghanistan. ... It is necessary to

let them fight it out among themselves.”

The French imperialists learned the hard way that the unconquerable will of both the Algerian and the Vietnamese people to be independent would erode their colonial army. U.S. commanders ran into the same lesson when the U.S. ruling

class thought it would replace the French in Southeast Asia. Now the Afghan and Iraqi people are showing once again that no amount of high-tech military hardware can force a people to submit to foreign domination and exploitation.

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Political prisoners in Afghanistan ask:

Stop torture and killing in Policharkhi Jail

Though the leading organization in the Afghan resistance to U.S.-NATO occupation is the Taliban, secular, progressive and pro-socialist groupings also participate. One such group sent the following letter from prisoners in Afghanistan to the Anti-Imperialist Camp in Europe. Workers World edited the English translation.

Stop human rights crimes and oppression

Policharkhi prison is one of the most awful and illegal prisons of the world. The true story of the prison has never found its way to the people and the media.

The puppet regime of [President Hamid] Karzai, which was imposed by foreign imperialist countries on the downtrodden Moslem people of Afghanistan in 2002, was confronted from the first day it was established by a serious countrywide reaction and resistance from our brave and patriotic people. The unauthorized regime, with the help of its foreign masters (U.S.-led NATO invading countries), never withholds the use of any type of force, violence, oppression or barbarism in carrying out repression of public resistance. Before all national and international communities it keeps openly violating all the human rights, laws and conventions that it claims to defend.

To physically erase its opposition and resistance during the last six years, the Karzai puppet regime and his criminal foreign collaborating forces have killed, bombed, injured and disabled, made homeless, and taken the property of hundred of thousands of people. They have also imprisoned tens of thousands more in their awful jails and detention centers because these people were defending their own country and opposing the occupation.

Policharkhi prison officials treat its

approximately 3,000 inmates contrary to all national and international laws and human rights standards. All our human rights are violated harshly. Afghan officials and their NATO masters employ mental and physical tortures such as insults, humiliation, death threats, sleep deprivation, beatings with cables and weapons, slaps and kicks, electric shocks, standing in and drowning in water and hanging upside down. Besides these torture techniques, the NATO forces, especially the U.S., force the prisoners to stand naked, subject them to sexual abuse, have dogs bite them, tie them up in snow and cold weather, and prevent them from meeting with their family and friends.

Everybody knows that 80 percent of Policharkhi inmates are political prisoners, but the despotic Karzai regime, to hide its beastly face, ignores all these facts and identifies all the prisoners as “criminals” and “terrorists.” Without legal defense attorneys and subject to arbitrary judgment, more than 17 inmates were executed in 2007, under the aforementioned justification.

Now there is a list of hundreds of prisoners awaiting execution on Karzai’s desk. But since prisoners’ executions are condemned on both national and international levels, the regime—in accordance with its nature—chooses to execute secretly.

Secret executions in Policharkhi jail are not new news, but have intensified since 2007. The prison’s authorities usually withdraw some of the “dangerous” prisoners for “investigation” from their cells late at night. They never return.

We, the prisoners of Policharkhi jail, representing all prisoners, request from national and international organizations and individuals who defend human rights to urge Karzai and his master to:

1. Immediately halt the series of secret executions in Policharkhi jail. An impartial investigation must be carried out regarding the missing inmates and their families should be given justice and satisfaction.
2. Rapidly invalidate the list of around 100 prisoners scheduled for execution that was prepared by the corrupt and puppet Supreme Court. The prisoners’ cases should be reviewed in an open trial.
3. Ban crime, violence and mental and physical tortures in all parts of Afghanistan, especially in Policharkhi jail.
4. Recognize the political prisoners in Policharkhi as political prisoners.
5. Grant all prisoners access to legal defense attorneys and the right to self defense and stop all secret trials.
6. Punish all corrupt police and judiciary officials who commit crimes.
7. Allow all prisoners the right to contact and meet their families, media and civil society.

God bless you,

Political Prisoners of Policharkhi Jail
Kabul, Afghanistan, April 2008



in Mindanao, Philippines

armed conflict in the Mindanao area, with increased U.S. and Philippine militarization and foreign mining and land-grabbing for decades, not religious conflict or ‘terrorism’ as projected by Malacañang (Philippine presidential palace) or the U.S. government.”

“The U.S. government is also notorious in its history of annihilation and genocide of the indigenous peoples of North America and repression against racial minorities. It cannot be sincere in building peace with or conceding to the aspirations of Bangsamoro people. Just look at its track record,” Quijano states.

Quijano also states that the historic

fight of the oppressed Bangsamoro people for autonomy from the Philippine republic is being exploited by the Arroyo and U.S. governments to push for charter change and federalism in the Philippines.

“By issuing a bogus ‘memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain,’ the Arroyo clique is shamelessly and covertly pushing to change the Philippine constitution. There is no intention to cultivate peace with the people of Mindanao on Arroyo’s part. As an abuse of her executive powers, Arroyo’s provisions, with the blessing of the U.S. government will include an extension of her unpopular, dictatorial term,” Quijano adds.

Despite peace rhetoric espoused by the U.S. government and the Arroyo regime, recent Philippine military offensives in Mindanao have displaced over 150,000 people, both Moro and non-Moro. Armed conflict is also on the rise in the region.

BAYAN USA has been active since its 2005 founding in demanding an end to U.S. intervention in the Philippines, and was part of a broader campaign to restrict U.S. military aid to the Arroyo government last year. The alliance also vowed to take the issue of U.S. intervention in the Philippines to the newly elected U.S. presidency.

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La guerra de la OTAN-EEUU en Georgia: ¿Quién gana, quién pierde?

Por Sara Flounders

El ataque del Ejército de Georgia en la pequeña nación de Osetia del Sur, respaldado y armado por los EEUU, tendrá amplias repercusiones, incluso aquí en EEUU. El ataque inmediatamente causó gran sufrimiento a decenas de miles de personas en Osetia del Sur y en Georgia. Fue el tema de una reunión de alto nivel en el Cuartel General de la OTAN en Bruselas, y tendrá un impacto en la lucha contra el emplazamiento de bases para misiles de EEUU en Polonia y la República Checa.

A pesar de que hubo muchos perdedores, la guerra ha aumentado las ganancias económicas anticipadas por las gigantescas corporaciones militares de los EEUU. El costo a largo plazo de la guerra y de la expansión de la OTAN, si es permitida, contribuirá a un mayor deterioro de las ciudades en los EEUU y empeorará las vidas de l@s trabajador@s aquí.

La guerra en el Cáucaso fue una “campaña para las acciones de defensa (Wall Street Journal - WSJ, 16 de agosto)”. Grandes programas armamentísticos estadounidenses que cuestan miles de millones de dólares, como el avión de combate F-22 “Raptor” y barcos destructores de alta tecnología, podrán obtener financiamiento a largo plazo con mayor facilidad si los medios de comunicación se enfocan en supuestas amenazas de Rusia y China.

La guerra en Georgia viene en un momento de ingresos y ventas récord para las industrias militares, reportó el WSJ. “Ahora la situación en Rusia pone el debate acerca del equipamiento de las Fuerzas Armadas (FFAA) de los EEUU en una situación prioritaria. ‘La amenaza siempre moviliza la obtención de fondos’, declaró un funcionario de la industria de defensa. ‘No importa qué partido esté en el poder’”.

Los intereses de EEUU están en juego en Georgia

El ataque de Georgia fue un golpe devastador al pueblo osetiano, que ha mantenido su cultura e identidad nacional como una región autónoma por 70 años, mientras fue parte de la Unión Soviética y ha resistido el intento de Georgia de tomar el enclave autónomo desde 1991.

El ataque de Georgia el 7 de agosto destruyó Tskhinvali, la capital de Osetia del Sur, con bombas que impactaron la universidad, el parlamento, un hospital, y muchos otros edificios. Más de 1400 personas murieron y decenas de miles fueron

heridas y traumatizadas. Decenas de miles perdieron su hogar.

Tropas rusas respondieron al devastador ataque que destruyó gran parte de Osetia del Sur, expulsando a los atacantes. Durante este contraataque, el Ejército de Georgia, entrenado y equipado por los EEUU e Israel (además de contar con consejeros de esos países), colapsó por completo y abandonó sus nuevas armas de alta tecnología, tanques y misiles en las carreteras.

“Los israelíes estaban acantonados en bases en toda [Georgia] proporcionando entrenamiento en reconocimiento e infantería a nivel de batallones” reportó el diario israelí Ha’aretz el 10 de agosto.

Los EEUU, Gran Bretaña, Francia, Israel, la Rep. Checa, Polonia y otros países han estado proporcionando a Georgia lo último en armamento ofensivo, como tanques, aviones, helicópteros de ataque y transportes blindados para transporte de personal.

El colapso humilló a las Fuerzas Armadas de Georgia, cuyo presupuesto militar (proporcionado por EEUU) ha aumentado en un 60% anual desde 2004 y es actualmente \$1000 millones (Stockholm International Peace Research Report). Infantes de Marina de los EEUU acababan de concluir 3 semanas de ejercicios militares con las FFAA de Georgia antes del ataque.

El Fondo Nacional para la Democracia (National Endowment for Democracy), institución del Gobierno de EEUU y el multimillonario George Soros habían financiado el proyecto de 2003 llamado “Revolución de las Rosas”, el cual instaló al actual régimen. Los EEUU también instigaron un cambio de régimen similar denominado “Revolución Naranja” en Ucrania en 2004-2005, instalando un gobierno sumiso a los dictámenes de EEUU.

Escalada y retroceso en los planes de EEUU

Luego de la frenética retirada georgiana y llamados para una intervención de la OTAN, Washington aumentó las ten-

siones presionando al Gobierno Polaco a aceptar instalar misiles estadounidenses en Polonia. Anteriormente, el Gobierno pro estadounidense de Polonia había dudado en aceptar esta base. La población de Polonia había expresado en encuestas, una abrumadora oposición a esta agresiva y peligrosa escalada militar.

Tres países miembros de la OTAN (Alemania, Francia e Italia) se habían opuesto públicamente a esta base de misiles de EEUU, la cual haría factible un primer ataque a Rusia. La base podría llevar a una escalada de tensiones entre la OTAN y Rusia, e iniciar una nueva carrera armamentista al estilo de la guerra fría.

Washington convocó una reunión de emergencia de la OTAN para el 19 de agosto, para presionar por una acción unificada contra Rusia. El Gobierno de Bush usó la intensa propaganda anti rusa de esa semana para tratar de forzar la inclusión de Ucrania y Georgia como miembros de la OTAN. Sin embargo, el resto de los miembros europeos de la OTAN declararon, como ya lo habían hecho en la reunión de Bucarest en abril, que la membresía de ambos países sería discutida en diciembre.

Luego del colapso del Ejército Georgiano, la Administración Bush alegó haber advertido a los georgianos no usar la fuerza en Osetia o Abjasia, otra región autónoma fronteriza con Georgia. Pero la Secretaria de Estado Condoleezza Rice había visitado Georgia menos de un mes antes del ataque, en cuyo momento hizo ver claro que la Adm. Bush apoyaba completamente los reclamos georgianos sobre ambas regiones.

Georgia difícilmente se hubiera atrevido a movilizar cientos de millones de dólares de armamento suplido por los EEUU sin el respaldo de Washington. Tampoco habrían podido movilizar ese armamento en secreto.

Funcionarios sudosetianos advirtieron públicamente, dos días antes de la ofensiva georgiana, que dicho ataque por parte de Georgia ocurriría antes de septiembre (RIA Novosti News, 6 de agosto)

Problemas para la expansión de la OTAN

La OTAN se ha expandido desde que era una alianza militar de potencias imperialistas de Europa Occidental, comandada por EEUU. Ha más que

duplicado su membresía original de 12 países y ha intervenido desde Afganistán hasta en los países que rodean a China como parte de su esfuerzo para asegurar el dominio mundial de las corporaciones estadounidenses.

Cada nuevo miembro de la OTAN debe endeudarse y volverse dependiente para equipar sus FFAA con armas estadounidenses. Así como el esfuerzo anti ruso, esto es fantástico para un puñado de corporaciones estadounidenses, y nefasto para todos los demás.

Desde Irak a Afganistán y ahora en Georgia, los planes del Pentágono están creando problemas y encontrando resistencia.

Importantes marchas en Ucrania la primavera pasada se opusieron a la inclusión en la OTAN, mientras que encuestas en Polonia y la Rep. Checa revelan un 70% de oposición a las bases de EEUU, las cuales deben ser aprobadas por los parlamentos de ambos países. El someter cualquiera de ambas proposiciones al voto popular podría ser un golpe para estos regímenes de derecha pro estadounidenses.

En Georgia, la derrota humillante del Presidente Mikheil Saakashvili, luego de su aventurera agresión podría llevar a su caída. Este abogado educado en Nueva York, quien ha trabajado en el bien conectado bufete de abogados Patterson, Belknap, Webb, y Tyler, es el mejor amigo de Washington en la región.

Crisis económica y militarismo

Mientras que el Pentágono es el aparato militar más grande del planeta, mantener esta máquina de guerra global está empeorando el derrumbamiento de la economía en EEUU.

El presupuesto militar de los EEUU es ahora mayor que el presupuesto militar del resto de los estados nacionales combinados. Sólo el presupuesto adicional para pagar por las guerras en Irak y Afganistán, el cual no forma parte del presupuesto oficial de defensa, es mayor que el presupuesto militar combinado de China y Rusia. De acuerdo al Comité de los Amigos sobre Legislación Nacional (organización pacifista iniciada por los cuáqueros), el gasto militar de los EEUU se ha duplicado en la última década, y el presupuesto del Pentágono para 2009 se ha establecido en más de \$ 600 mil millones.

Este presupuesto es un gigantesco subsidio a las más grandes y poderosas corporaciones en los EEUU hoy en día, las cuales pagan mucho dinero a sus ejecutivos e ingresos multimillonarios a sus accionistas. Mientras tanto, más de 2 millones de personas están perdiendo sus casas en la crisis hipotecaria.

Es la responsabilidad de los movimientos en contra de la guerra, progresistas y de la clase trabajadora en los EEUU el señalar y movilizarse en contra de estos peligrosos y agresivos planes de guerra que amenazan la vida en todo el planeta. Igualmente, es de una importancia crucial el conectar los exorbitantes costos del militarismo y las fantásticas ganancias para el puñado de los súper ricos, con los recortes en programas sociales, atención de la salud y educación para el resto de la población. □

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